

Transition from Minuteman III to the Ground-Based Strategic Deterrent

The Minuteman weapon system began operational alert in 1962 and has been operating on a continuous alert status since. Many Minuteman III components, such as life support equipment, blast protection, and inertial guidance units, are beyond end of life and cannot be life extended. The replacement for this weapon system, the Ground Based Strategic Deterrent (GBSD), is planned to achieve Milestone B in the fourth quarter of fiscal year 2020, with initial operations beginning around 2030. Over the next decade, the Air Force must maintain continuous alert status of the Minuteman III while simultaneously replacing it with the GBSD across 450 launch facilities and launch control centers, at three missile fields, in order to provide the Commander, U.S. Strategic Command (STRATCOM), with forces to meet deterrence requirements.

Accordingly, the committee directs the Secretary of the Air Force, in consultation with the Commander, STRATCOM, to provide a report to the congressional defense committees, not later than February 26, 2021, on: (1) The drawdown schedule of the Minuteman III weapon system at each missile field, including the removal of the missile from the launch facility as well as the replacement of the launch control centers; (2) The launch facility insertion rate of the GBSD missile at each missile field; (3) The expected date of GBSD full operational capability for each missile wing and squadron; (4) The estimated annual costs of maintaining Minuteman III until its full retirement; and (5) Proposed actions during this transition period to account for any reduction or gaps in operational availability of the land-based leg of the triad in order for STRATCOM to meet its deterrence requirements.

United States Space Command Headquarters

The committee recognizes the bipartisan congressional support for the National Defense Strategy and, with it, the renewed emphasis on space as a contested domain that requires unique operational command and control capabilities. The committee's support for the establishment of the United States Space Force and United States Space Command as a unified combatant command reflect the need for elevated prioritization of the critical threats to our national security in the space domain. In the spirit of these efforts, and given the critical mission of military space operations, the committee directs the Secretary of the Air Force, in coordination with joint military partners and the intelligence community, to provide a report to the committee no later than 60 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, detailing the criteria and process by which the Department intends to determine the permanent site for the United States Space Command Headquarters.

Value of inland spaceports

The committee recognizes the benefits of inland commercial spaceports when coupled with airspace capable of meeting testing requirements of hypersonic and directed energy weapons. Inland commercial spaceports generally operate in remote locations that are less susceptible to airspace confliction and have significantly reduced electromagnetic interference. Moreover, inland spaceports